

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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RECENT ACQUISITION

Aert van der Neer
Dutch, c. 1603/04-1677
Moonlit Landscape with Bridge, c. 1650
Oil on panel, 43 3/8 x 30 13/16 in.
Patrons' Permanent Fund

Moonlit Landscape with Bridge, c. 1650, a signature piece by the Amsterdam painter Aert van der Neer (c. 1603/04-1677), is the first work of the artist to enter the collection of the National Gallery of Art. It was purchased with income from the Gallery's Patrons' Permanent Fund. The painting is one of Van der Neer's most important nocturnal landscapes, not only for its large and imposing scale, but also for its successful composition and accomplished atmospheric effects. With consummate skill the artist depicted the moon shining through the clouds of the Dutch sky and its reflection in a stream crossed by a bridge.

Although Moonlit Landscape with Bridge gives the impression of an actual site, perhaps a tributary flowing into the Amstel River on the outskirts of Amsterdam, it is an imaginary scene, painted in the artist's studio on the basis of studies made from life. Van der Neer, who began to specialize in nocturnes during the 1640s, often composed his scenes so that light would fall on buildings and the water and trees adjacent to them, as though to suggest the underlying unity and harmony of man and nature.

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